

# Galatians

## Original Historical Setting

**Author:** Paul

**Written:** ~48-49 A.D. or ~52-55 A.D.

**Audience:** Probably Christians living in the Roman province of Galatia

**Occasion:** Paul wrote mainly to stem the tide of Judaizing heresy to which he referred throughout the letter. Some had come proclaiming a different version of the Gospel. They also criticized Paul as a self-appointed apostle who did not truly reflect the message of Jesus.

### **Timeline:**

- ~35 AD – Paul's conversion
- ~47 AD – Paul starts churches in Galatia on 1<sup>st</sup> mission trip
- ~49 AD – Jerusalem Council
- ~50 AD – Paul starts 2<sup>nd</sup> mission trip
- ~53 AD – Paul starts 3<sup>rd</sup> mission trip
- ~60 AD – Paul imprisoned in Rome

## World Events that occur simultaneously

- 43 AD – Londinium (London) is founded by the Romans
- 44 AD – Judea is annexed as a Roman province after the death of Herod Agrippa
- ~46 AD – Famine in Judea
- ~50 AD – Heron of Alexandria attributed as inventor of 1<sup>st</sup> practical steam engine known as an aeolipile.
- 58 AD – Buddhism of India introduced to China

## Key text(s)

**2:20** – I have been crucified with Christ

**5:22-23** – But the fruit of the Spirit is...

**6:2** – Bear one another's burdens

**6:7** – A man reaps what he sows

## Genre/Literary style

An epistle (letter) written in (Koine) Greek

## Features and Structure:

Galatians can be divided easily into three sections centered around Paul's approach:

**Ch 1-2** personal; **Ch 3-4** doctrinal; and **Ch 5-6** practical.

I. Defense of Paul's apostolic authority and Gospel **CH 1-2**

II. Scriptural affirmation of Gospel **CH 3-4**

III. Practical application of living out the Gospel **CH 5-6**

## What to look for

- Notice the contrasting concepts such as divine revelation vs. human insight; grace vs. law; justification vs. condemnation; Jerusalem vs. Mount Sinai; sonship vs. slavery; fruit of the Spirit vs. works of the flesh; liberty vs. bondage.
- Paul is extremely emotionally upset in this letter. Read it with emotion in mind. For example after the typical introduction, he skips his usual appreciation and praise for the people and gets right into saying, "I marvel (am shocked, amazed) that you have so quickly turned from God to a different gospel!" In **Ch 3** he calls them foolish!

## Interesting facts

- Whirling dervishes are Muslim monks who dance into a spinning trance while trying to seek their god. They got their start in the 1200's in a 4,000-year old city near Lystra, Galatia, where Paul started a church.
- The Roman province of Galatia got its name from the Gauls of Western Europe who began settling there about 200 years before Christ. The term "Celt" comes from Greek Keltoi or Galatae (Galatian), and Latin Celtae or Galli (Gaul).
- The modern capital of Turkey, Ankara (ancient Ancyra), was also the capital of ancient Galatia.

## Memory Verse: Galatians 2:16